

Note on Census Data:

The population and demographic information provided in this chapter uses the most recent census data available for the Town, which comes from the 2000 United States Census. Other annual census programs such as the American Community Survey (ACS) only focus on geographic areas with a population greater than 65,000, and do not account for residents living in group quarters. Therefore the ACS does not provide reliable data for communities like Amherst, which have significant student populations.

3. PEOPLE: Demographics

OVERVIEW

This chapter presents a summary of the general demographic characteristics and projections for the Town of Amherst. These demographic characteristics provide a snapshot of the Town's population composition and also provide insight into the trends that may affect the Town in the future. Following this overview, the chapter is organized into two sections:

- **Key Findings** – The key findings represent a summary of important conclusions drawn by the consulting team based on research and discussions with the CPC and Town Staff.
- **Detailed Information** – This section includes the background documentation for the key findings. It offers details about Amherst's population trends and demographic characteristics.

The primary sources of information used to prepare this analysis include the 2000 US Census, the *Town of Amherst Databook*, and the Massachusetts Institute of Social and Economic Research population forecasts. It is important to note most data are for the year 2000 (see sidebar at left.)

KEY FINDINGS

1. According to the 2000 Census, the population of Amherst totaled 34,874. For the first time since 1790, Amherst's population declined.
2. Population grew at a remarkable pace from 1940 to 1980, increasing five-fold from 6,410 to 33,229 residents. Growth continued in the 1980s at a much slower pace.
3. Amherst's historic population growth is closely linked to the growth in student enrollment.
4. Amherst's rate of population growth from 1940 to 1990 far exceeded Hampshire County's growth. In recent years, the county's growth has equaled or exceeded the Town's.
5. Until recently, Amherst's share of the county's total population was increasing.
6. Population projections for Amherst vary greatly, suggesting the Town's population could grow by nearly 15 percent or decline by three percent between 2000 and 2020.
7. The presence of higher education institutions has a profound impact on Amherst's population composition. The population, with a median age of 21.8 years in 2000, was far younger than the county, the state, or the nation.
8. In 2000, the population density in the Town ranged from a high of 11,990 persons per dry square mile to a low of 203.
9. Amherst's population is aging, but it is still relatively young.
10. There are slightly more females than males in Amherst.
11. Amherst has an exceptionally well-educated population.
12. Amherst is a relatively and increasingly racially and ethnically diverse community. It is considerably more diverse than the county and the state.
13. Amherst has fewer residents with disabilities as a share of the total population than the county, state, or nation.
14. Household population in the Town is strongly related to the presence of higher education institutions. A large portion of the Town's population lives in group quarters.
15. Thirty-nine percent of the Town's population lives in family households.
16. Despite a decline in population, the number of households increased.
17. Income generally has been increasing over time, but median income is lower than other jurisdictions due to the large number of students. Family income is above or on par with other areas.

DETAILED INFORMATION

The following section includes more detailed explanations and supporting data for the Key Findings listed above.

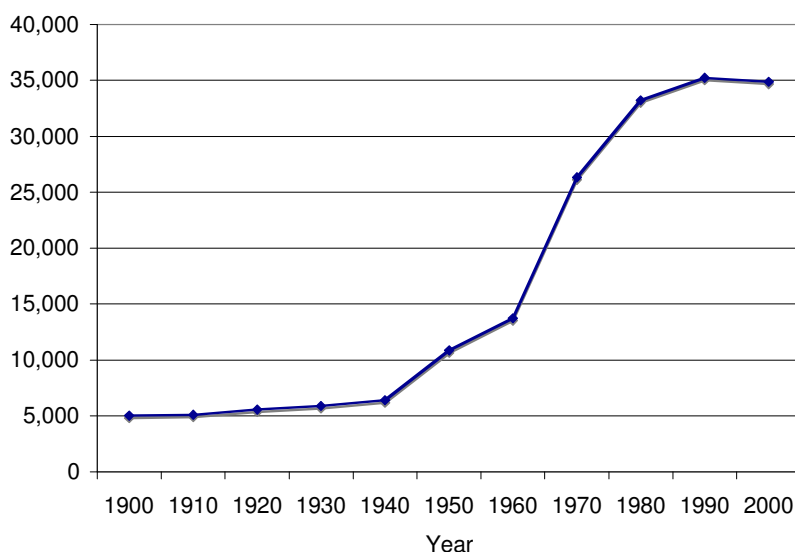
According to the 2000 Census, the population of Amherst totaled 34,874. For the first time since 1790, Amherst's population declined.

In 2000, there were 354 fewer residents than in 1990. The Census Bureau's estimate for 2005 was even lower, estimating Amherst's population at 34,047. (See Figures 1A and 1B.)

Figure 1B: Amherst Historic Population Growth, 1900-2000

| Year | Total Population | Total Change | Percent Change |
|------|------------------|--------------|----------------|
| 1900 | 5,028 | | |
| 1910 | 5,112 | 84 | 1.67% |
| 1920 | 5,550 | 438 | 8.57% |
| 1930 | 5,888 | 338 | 6.09% |
| 1940 | 6,410 | 522 | 8.87% |
| 1950 | 10,856 | 4,446 | 69.36% |
| 1960 | 13,718 | 2,862 | 26.36% |
| 1970 | 26,331 | 12,613 | 91.94% |
| 1980 | 33,229 | 6,898 | 26.20% |
| 1990 | 35,228 | 1,999 | 6.02% |
| 2000 | 34,874 | -354 | -1.00% |

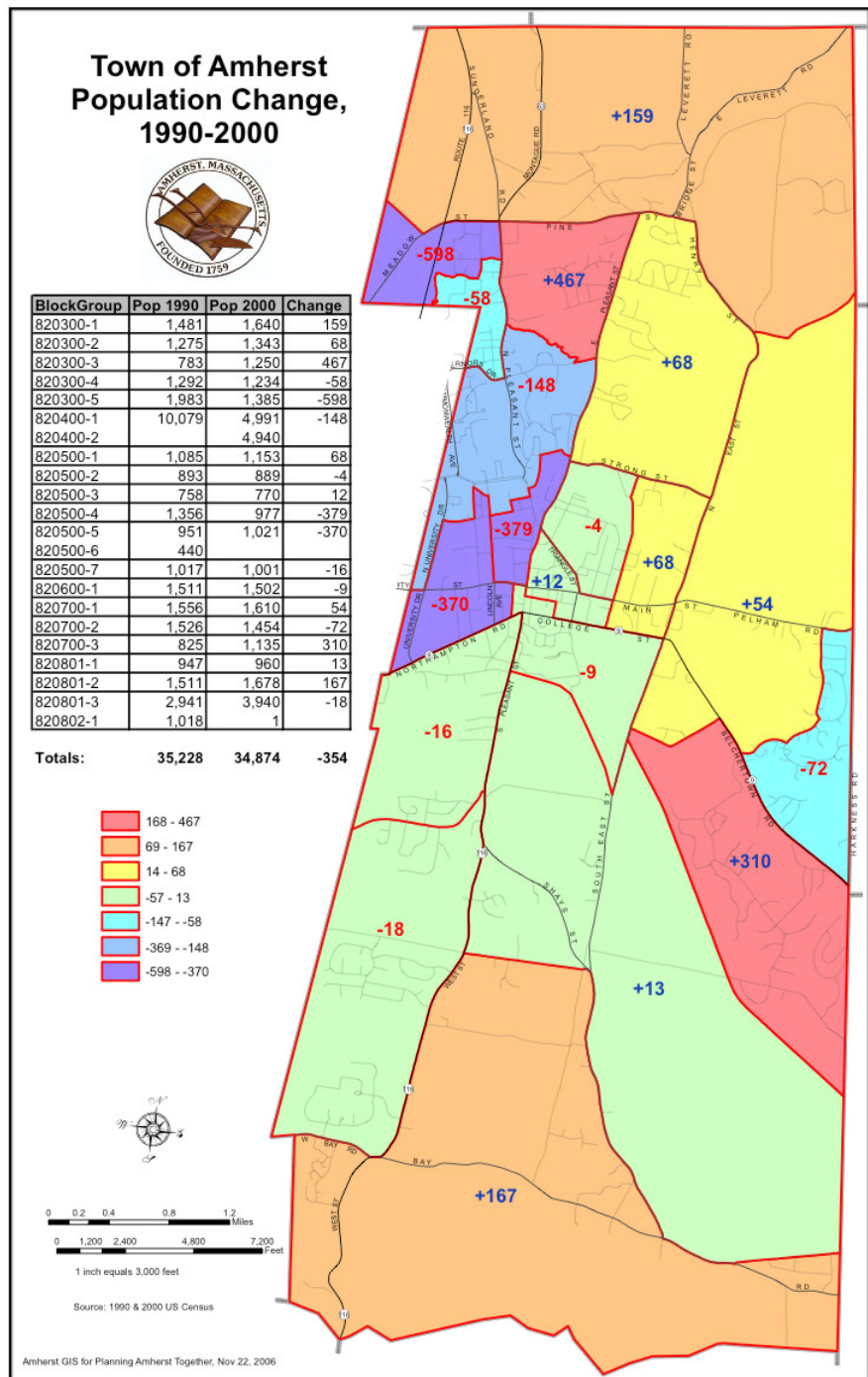
FIGURE 1A: AMHERST HISTORIC POPULATION GROWTH, 1900-2000



Source: US Census

Map 1, Town of Amherst Population Change, 1990-2000 (see page 3.4) depicts population change by Census block group. The areas that experienced the most profound decline in population are those within or near UMass. The University's decrease in student enrollment of 904 students between 1990 and 2000 may account for a portion of this decrease. There is also the possibility that the student population may not have been accurately counted. The Census blocks that received the greatest increase in population are those that experienced new residential development.

MAP 1: TOWN OF AMHERST, POPULATION CHANGE MAP, 1990-2000



Source: US Census and Town of Amherst

Amherst's population grew at a remarkable pace between 1940 and 1980, increasing five-fold from 6,410 to 33,229 residents. Growth continued in the 1980s at a much slower pace.

Amherst's population growth was relatively stable until the 1940s, when it increased notably. Between 1940 and 1950, the population grew by 4,446 residents, an increase of 69 percent. Between 1960 and 1970, Amherst

gained its greatest number of residents, 12,613, nearly doubling the population of Town. Growth in the following decade slowed, but was still substantial as 6,900 residents were added, an increase of 26 percent. Between 1980 and 1990, population increased by only 6 percent.

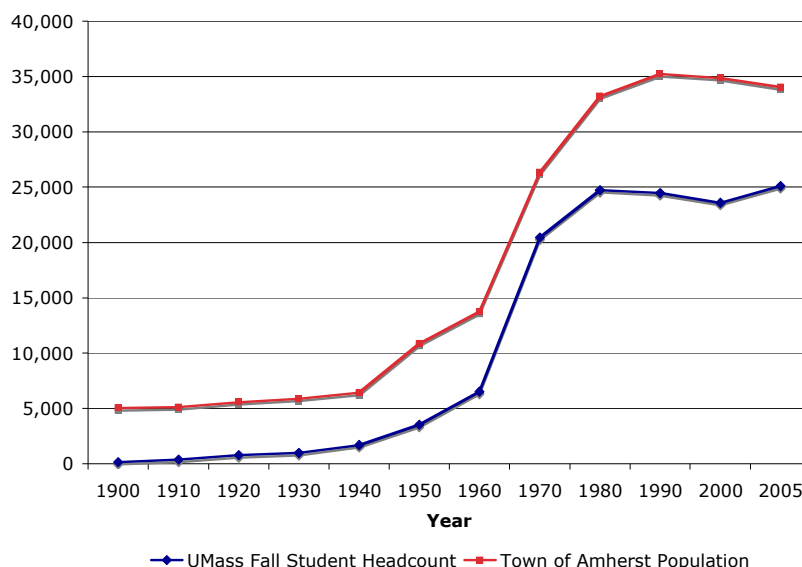
Amherst's historic population growth is closely linked to the growth in student enrollment.

As mentioned above, between 1940 and 1950 the Town's population grew markedly by 69 percent. This corresponds with UMass's first significant increase in student enrollment and the time that it changed from "Mass State" to the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. In the 1960s, UMass's student enrollment jumped by 215 percent, an increase of nearly 14,000 students in a decade when baby-boomers came of age. During that same time, the Town's population grew 92 percent and added 12,600 new residents. (See Figures 2A and 2B.) Amherst College and Hampshire College with smaller student populations have not had as dramatic an effect on population growth. Clearly, not all students – or the faculty and administrative staff – are accommodated on the University's campus or within the boundaries of the Town of Amherst. Many reside in surrounding communities. The impact of changes in student enrollment at UMass plays a significant role in the population changes and composition of the Town.

Figure 2B: UMass at Amherst Fall Student Headcount, 1900-2005

| Year | Total Population | Total Change | Percent Change |
|------|------------------|--------------|----------------|
| 1900 | 149 | | |
| 1910 | 365 | 216 | 144.97% |
| 1920 | 760 | 395 | 108.22% |
| 1930 | 950 | 190 | 25.00% |
| 1940 | 1,670 | 720 | 75.79% |
| 1950 | 3,524 | 1,854 | 111.02% |
| 1960 | 6,495 | 2,971 | 84.31% |
| 1970 | 20,462 | 13,967 | 215.04% |
| 1980 | 24,737 | 10,770 | 20.89% |
| 1990 | 24,474 | -263 | -1.06% |
| 2000 | 23,570 | -904 | -3.69% |
| 2005 | 25,093 | 1,523 | 6.46% |

FIGURE 2A: TOWN OF AMHERST HISTORIC POPULATION GROWTH AND UMASS FALL STUDENT HEADCOUNT, 1900-2005



Source: US Census and UMass Office of Institutional Research enrollment census file

Amherst's rate of population growth from 1940 to 1990 far exceeded Hampshire County's growth. In recent years, however, the county's growth has equalled or exceeded the Town's.

Between 1940 and 1980, the Hampshire County's population doubled while Amherst's grew five-fold. In the 1980s, each grew by approximately six percent. Between 1990 and 2000, the county grew by nearly four percent, while Amherst's population declined by 1 percent.

Until recently, Amherst's share of the county's total population was increasing.

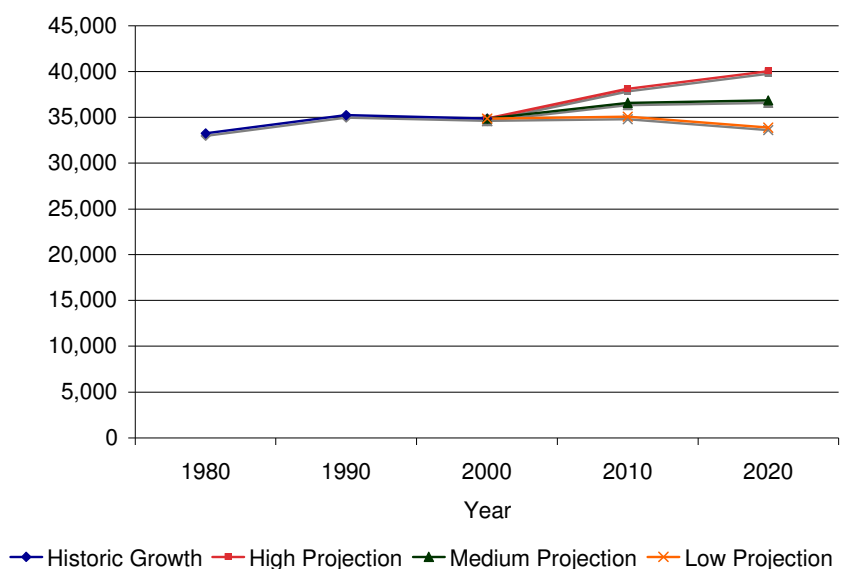
In the decades leading up to the 2000, the Town's share of Hampshire County's population grew from approximately nine percent in 1940 to 24 percent in 1990. In 2000, the Town accounted for 23 percent of the county's population.

Population projections for Amherst vary greatly, suggesting the Town's population could grow by nearly 15 percent or decline by three percent between 2000 and 2020.

The Massachusetts Institute for Economic Policy and Research (MISER) at the University of Massachusetts generates low, medium, and high population projections for the entire state of Massachusetts. They employ a cohort-component model in which fertility, mortality, and migration are projected independently.

According to their projections, the Town's population could increase by 5,146 residents or decrease by nearly 1,000 residents. The medium estimate suggests an increase of just under 2,000 residents. (See Figures 3A and 3B.)

FIGURE 3A: AMHERST HISTORIC POPULATION AND POPULATION PROJECTIONS, 1980-2020



Source: Massachusetts Institute for Economic Policy and Research (MISER)

Figure 3B: Amherst Population Projections, 2000-2020

| | 2000 Census | 2010 Projection | 2020 Projection | Percent Change 2000-2010 | Percent Change 2010-2020 | Percent Change 2000-2020 | Total Change 2000-2020 |
|--------|-------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| HIGH | 34,874 | 38,114 | 40,020 | 9.3% | 5.0% | 14.8% | 5,146 |
| MEDIUM | 34,874 | 36,583 | 36,840 | 4.9% | 0.7% | 5.6% | 1,966 |
| LOW | 34,874 | 35,074 | 33,876 | 0.6% | -3.4% | -2.9% | -998 |

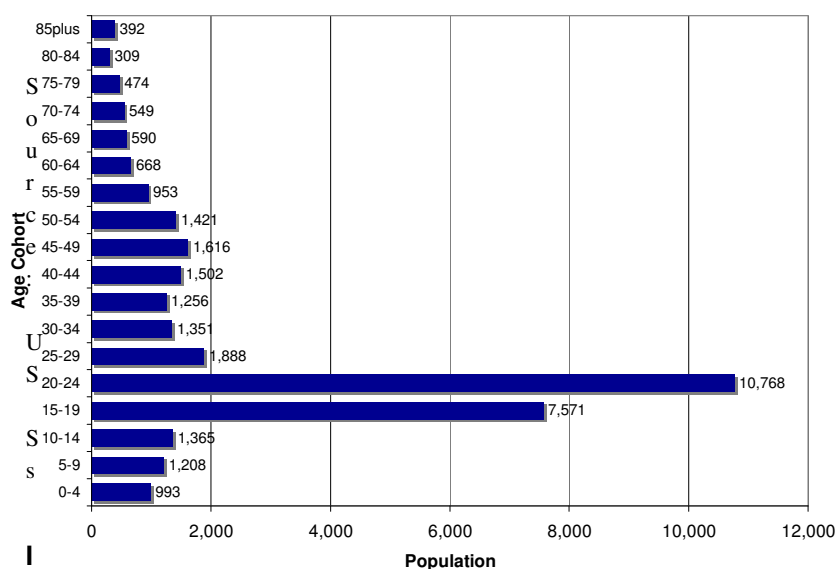
Source: Massachusetts Institute for Economic Policy and Research (MISER)

Any population projections are subject to some degree of uncertainty, and this is particularly true when looking at smaller geographic areas. This is why a range of high, medium, and low projections are typically provided. While it is impossible to exactly predict future trends using population projections, it is also important to note that trends are not destiny. The plans and policies developed by the Town of Amherst, UMass, and other local entities will have a significant impact in directing the course of future population growth in Amherst. The Chancellor of UMass has a stated desire to grow the institution by 6,000 students, which would certainly push the projections towards the higher end. Policies developed for the Town's Master Plan – particularly those related to land use, housing, and economic development – will also clearly influence potential population growth.

The presence of higher education institutions has a profound impact on Amherst's population composition. The population, with a median age of 21.8 years in 2000, was far younger than the county, the state, or the nation.

In 2000, the enrollment figures at Amherst higher education institutions were 23,570 for University of Massachusetts Amherst, 1,694 for Amherst College, and 1,139 for Hampshire College. Although all students do not reside within the boundaries of Amherst, those that do have a profound impact on the Town's population composition.

The median age for Amherst was 21.8 years in 2000 as compared to 34.4 for the county, 36.5 for the state, and 35.3 for the nation. According to the 2000 Census, the single largest age cohort in the Town was those aged 20-24, which accounted for 30.9 percent of the total population. This was followed by the 15 to 19 age group, which accounted for 21.7 percent. The 25 to 64 age group, generally considered among the most economically productive members of a community, accounted for 30.5 percent of the population. (See Figure 4.)

FIGURE 4: AMHERST POPULATION BY AGE COHORT, 2000

Source: US Census Bureau

In 2000, the population density in the Town ranged from a high of 11,990 persons per dry square mile to a low of 203.

Map 2: Town of Amherst 2000 US Census Population Density depicts the density of Amherst residents by Census block group (see page 3.9). The densest areas found in and around UMass and downtown Amherst. The least densely population areas are in north Amherst and south and south-central Amherst.

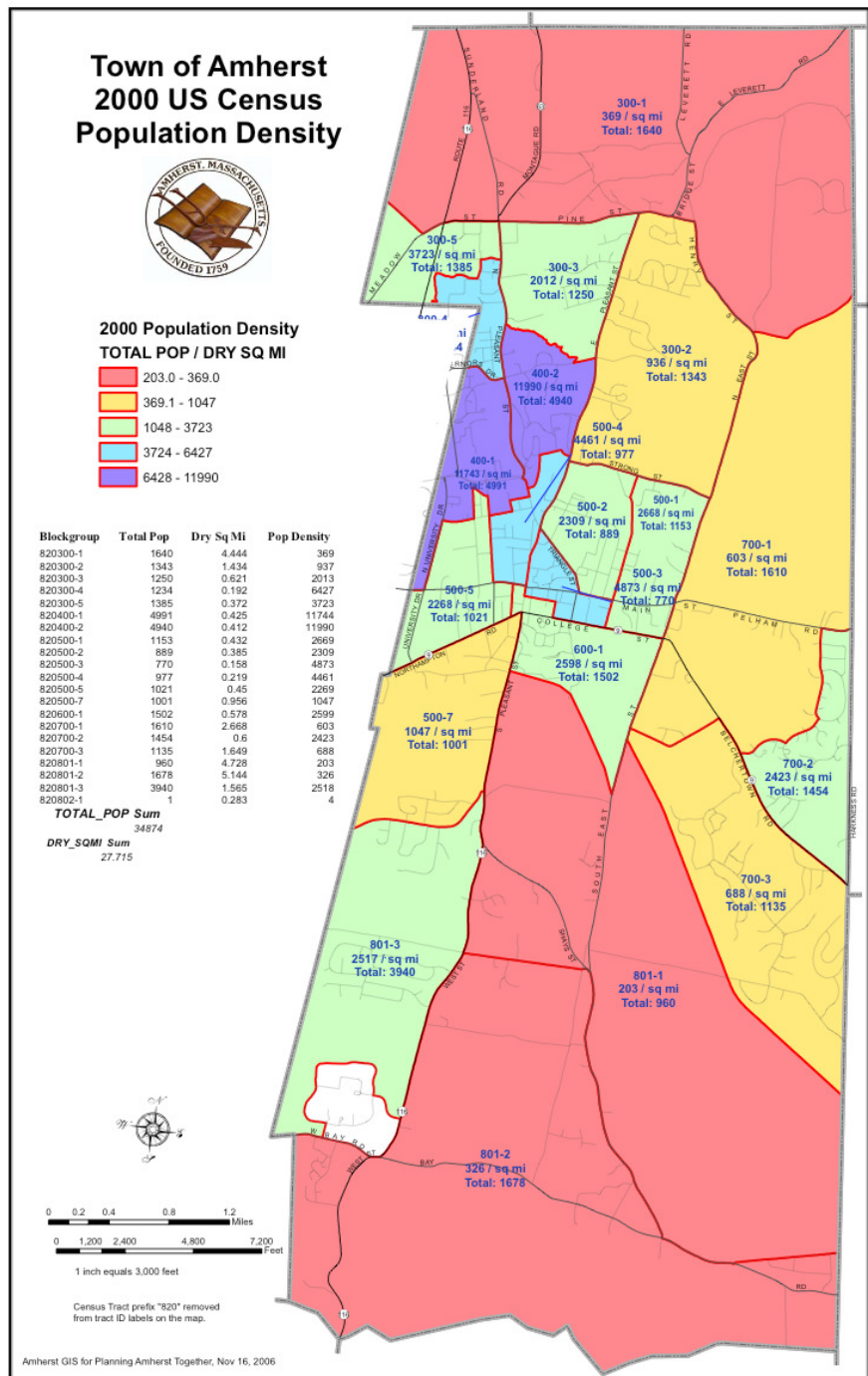
Amherst's population is aging, but it is still relatively young.

According to the Census, the population aged 65 and over was growing markedly faster than other age groups. In each of the two decades leading up to 2000, the population aged 65 and over grew 28 percent. In addition, between 1990 and 2000, this age group was the only one to grow, adding 518 people, while those aged 20 to 64 years declined by 615 people and those under 19 years declined by 257.

Despite the increasing number of residents aged 65 and over, only 6.6 percent of the Town's population was in this age group. By comparison, 12 percent of the county, 13.5 percent of the state and 12.4 percent of the nation were in this age group.

According to the MISER projections, Amherst's population will continue to age. In 2000, those aged 65 and over comprised 6.6 percent of the population. In the medium projection, this cohort will increase to 11.3 percent of the total population by 2020.

MAP 2: TOWN OF AMHERST POPULATION DENSITY, 2000



Source: US Census and Town of Amherst

There are slightly more females than males in Amherst.

According to the 2000 Census, 52 percent of the population was female and 48 percent male. The national figures are 51 percent and 49 percent respectively.

Amherst has an exceptionally well-educated population.

In 2000, among Amherst residents 25 years and over, 95 percent were high school graduates and 68 percent had a bachelor's degree or higher (27 percent had a bachelor's degree and 42 percent had a graduate or professional degree).

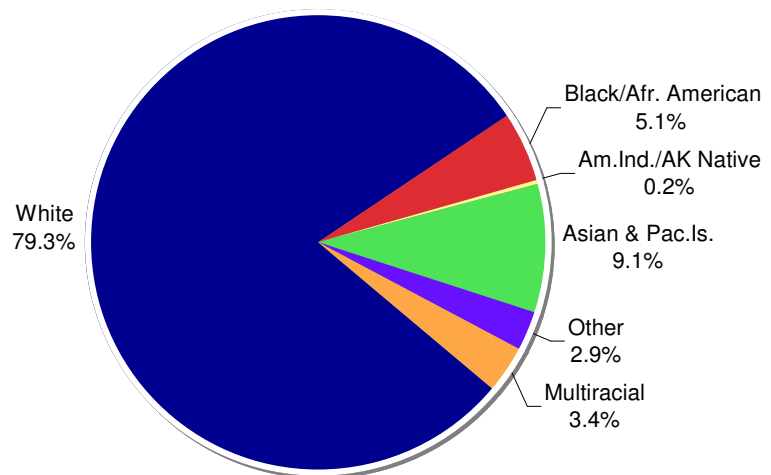
This far exceeds the statistics for the county, state, and nation. In the case of the county, 89 percent of population 25 or over was a high school graduate or higher and 38 percent had a bachelor's degree or higher. For the state this breakdown was 85 percent and 33 percent, and for the nation it was 80 percent and 24 percent.

Amherst is a relatively and increasingly racially and ethnically diverse community. It is considerably more diverse than the county and the state.

In 2000, just over 20 percent of Amherst's population was non-white. Of its 7,209 minority residents, 44 percent were Asian/Pacific Islander and 25 percent were black. (See Figure 5.) Six percent were Hispanic/Latino.

Between 1990 and 2000, the minority population increased 36 percent while the white population declined 7.6 percent. In comparison to other towns in Hampshire County, Amherst is markedly more diverse, accounting for nearly 53 percent of all minorities living in the county, and 60 percent of the county's black and Asian residents.

FIGURE 5: AMHERST POPULATION BY RACE, 2000



Source: US Census Bureau

As of 2000, nine percent of Hampshire County's population was non-white, 15 percent of the state's population was non-white, while nearly 25 percent of the nation's population was non-white. Approximately 12.5 percent of the nation was Hispanic or Latino.

Amherst is also very multi-cultural. Approximately 20 percent (6,844) of those age 5 and over speak a language other than English at home; only 18 percent of the nation's population falls into this category. Among those who do not speak English at home, 30 percent speak it less than "very well." Just over 13 percent of residents are foreign-born, compared to 11 percent of the nation.

Amherst has fewer residents with disabilities as a share of the total population than the county, state, or nation.

In 2000, 10.8 percent of the population 5 years and over had a disability. The percentages for the county, state, and nation were 15.7, 18.5, and 19.3 respectively.

Household population in the Town is strongly related to the presence of higher education institutions. A large portion of the Town's population lives in group quarters.

In 2000, there were 9,174 households in the Town. Sixty-four percent of the total population lived in households. Thirty-five percent (12,293) were people living in group quarters, (i.e. students). This differs greatly from the household/group quarters split for other geographies. In the county 88 percent lived in households versus 12 percent in group quarters. In the state this split was 96.5 versus 3.5 percent, and in the nation this split was 97.2 versus 2.8 percent.

Thirty-nine percent of the Town's population live in family households.

The 9,174 households in the Town were split almost equally between family households (4,457) and non-family households (4,627). The 4,547 families in the Town accounted for 13,518 residents. Only 39 percent of the Town's population was in families. Seventy-three percent of family households were married couples with children. The average family size was 2.97.

Twenty-four percent of population was in non-family households. Of the non-family households, 57 percent live alone and 43 percent do not live alone.

Despite a decline in population, the number of households increased.

The number of households has been steadily increasing over time. This was due to both population growth and to the decrease in household size, as evidenced by the fact that the number of households increased between 1990 and 2000 from 8,477 to 9,174, even as population declined.

Income generally has been increasing over time, but median income is lower than other jurisdictions due to the large number of students. Family income is above or on par with other areas.

Median household income is not consistent in all parts of the Town. The presence of large numbers of students has an impact on this dynamic. In 1999, the median household income of the Town was \$40,017, but this varied from a high of \$57,000 to a low of \$22,400 in different census tracts. The census tract with the lowest household income includes the UMass campus. It is worthwhile to note that while household income in this tract may be low, it does not necessarily reflect the economic condition of people who may still be receiving additional support from their families or other sources while studying.

While the median income for the Town was just over \$40,000, the county and state stood at \$46,098 and \$50,502 respectively. Family income in the Town was \$61,237, which is above the county figure of \$57,480 and on par with the state at \$61,664. These data suggest that the student population tends to lower income statistics, while other residents of the Town compare reasonably with others in the county and state.